



# 2021 spotlight

## Extension Waukesha County Impact Highlights of 2021

*Our annual Spotlight highlights a few of our educational programs to provide a snapshot of our outreach efforts. Thank you for your continued participation in and support of our programs. The ongoing development of partnerships in communities is vital to our work. I encourage you to share this with your network. Please reach out to us to learn more.*

Jerry Braatz, Area Extension Director



Municipal and landscape workers learn tree hazard assessments at our annual Urban Forestry Workshop

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### Horticulture — Consumer

Thirty-three clients of Peace 360 Initiative attended a virtual gardening presentation on the topic of planning and planting a vegetable garden. The organization contacted Extension requesting a presentation because their clients were not originally from Wisconsin and wanted to grow a vegetable garden. 100% of those completing the evaluation shared that as a result of attending the presentation, they gained valuable knowledge on how to plan and plant a vegetable garden. Of those who completed the evaluation, 41% were Asian, 41% were White, and 5% were African American.

*“StrongBodies helped keep me strong during a terrible pandemic and I am very grateful for that. It was wonderful to be a part of an interactive community instead of just following exercises on an online stream. Thanks to Jennifer and StrongBodies, I actually got stronger during COVID and my bone density remained the same!*

Virtual Program Participant

### **Community Development**

In partnership with the Waukesha County Community Development Block Grant program, Extension educators facilitated a strategic planning process to update the five-year Strategic Plan for Waukesha's Haertel Field Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) involving over 70 residents and other stakeholders. Participants established priorities and made strategic recommendations. This updated strategic plan will provide direction for NRSA stakeholders and decision-makers to address demographic, economic and quality of life challenges and opportunities in the Haertel Field NRSA over the next five years.

*"Extension staff are such a pleasure to work with. Our CDBG office regularly contracts with Extension because we know the quality of the work product is exceptional. Extension staff take the time to really listen to what we need, and then they design a process and product to fit that need."*

Kristin Silva, Community Development Manager



Easter Seals used their Extension rental garden plot for educational programs with their Spanish speaking clients

*"The FoodWise lessons were good. Most of the students wanted to participate in the discussions. I believe that they learn a lot about the importance of eating healthy food. Thank you for bringing your experience and engaging the students in the nutrition experience."*

Waukesha Teacher

### **Health & Well-Being**

The Health & Well-Being Educator continued to connect with older adults to support positive health behaviors and provide opportunities for social connection. Two 10-week sessions of the Aging Mastery Program were held in partnership with two local health care systems. The Aging Mastery Program guides older adults to examine multiple facets of aging (e.g., nutrition, sleep, finances, community engagement). Through goal setting, the Aging Mastery Program helps participants reflect and purposefully make the most of their retirement years. Participants shared that the programs combatted the social isolation that has become more prevalent with our older adults due to COVID.

Extension staff build strong communities by engaging adults & youth in life-long learning, developing economic opportunity, and extending leadership capacity through educational programs and Extension-trained volunteers.



Youth participated in an a series of Extension afterschool citizenship lessons at Waukesha North High School

### **Horticulture — Commercial**

The Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course, which has been held in Waukesha the four Wednesdays in February since the 1980s has transitioned from in-person to an online format. Working with Extension educators from other counties, the audience expanded from around 450 attendees to more that 1,500 in 2021. Going virtual reduced the cost of the program and allowed for speakers from across the Midwest. The program will remain virtual in 2022.

### **Nutrition — FoodWise**

Extension partnered with Waukesha County Health and Human Service’s (HHS) Positive Youth Initiatives program to teach *Teen Cuisine*, providing teens involved with social workers important life skills. FoodWise provided a series to teens virtually in January-March 2021, and two in-person series in the Waukesha County Community Youth Garden during the summer of 2021. For the virtual series, educators conducted food preparation on camera, via Zoom, so youth would still experience the recipes being prepared in real time. The HHS staff helped to make the food experiences engaging for participants by donating and delivering the needed groceries to the teen participants’ homes, so they could make the recipe. All teens participating in *Teen Cuisine* series improved in at least one dietary behavior, with the highest gains in vegetable intake for the garden groups.



Extension partnered with the Tower Hill Neighborhood Association, Inc. to implement a resident-based neighborhood safety initiative

*“I absolutely loved Citizenship and what we were able to discuss. We can go into discussions that you can't really have during school hours. This gave me an opportunity to explore something I really care about.”*

Youth Development Participant

*“Much more than vegetables and herbs grow in the Waukesha County Community Youth Garden: the young people who devote over 18 hours of volunteer service each learn about themselves, about healthy foods and nutrition, and teamwork. The harvest at the end of the year is not just measured in pounds (although almost 600 pounds of food was donated), it is shown in the faces and improved attitudes of the children and youth who put their hearts and souls in their work. This year, I was so honored to join their end of the season celebration and was able to extend well-earned congratulations to Extension, HHS, the workers and their families. This is truly a hands-on program that should continue to thrive in our County.”*

Judge Maria S. Lazar

Juvenile Judge, Waukesha County Circuit Court



Youth participated in online *Kids in the Kitchen* nutrition lessons from their home

## Youth Development

Thirty-one students at Waukesha North High School participated in Extension Community Youth Development programs. A grant received from the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation over the past two years has supported over 125 youth. This program provided a quality educational experience, reduced participation barriers with under-represented audiences, explored personal interest, provided new program experiences and increased participation in extracurricular activities. Students participated in 5-week sessions and engaged in lessons each week. Projects included Creations in Clay, Art Metal and Jewelry, and Citizenship.

The Citizenship project focused on Immigration, Your Rights as a Citizen (Scotus), Your Rights as a Citizen (Elections), and Your Rights as a Citizen (Taking Informed Action). Fifteen youth participated in the project and over 75% of the youth identified as a person of color. As a group they accomplished a 75% attendance rate. One hundred percent of the youth stated they increased their knowledge on citizenship; 100% would participate in the program again and would highly recommend it to a friend. This program will continue at Waukesha North High School in 2022 while adding Waukesha South High School and Les Paul Middle School.

### Extension Programs:

- 4-H & Youth Development
- Health & Well-Being
- Horticulture
- Nutrition Education
- Community Development



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